

ASSOCIATES NEWS

Issue 54 | AUTUMN 2019



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ASCL Weekly Email

If you would like to sign up to receive the ASCL e-newsletter then please contact membership@ascl.org.uk stating your preferred email address, full name and membership number. You will receive the email every Tuesday during term time. To view previous issues please go to the ASCL website, News and Views, Newsletters. If you need login details for the website please email website@ascl.org.uk

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We're in good shape

I am delighted to welcome you to this edition of *Associates News* and if this is your first time with our magazine, then it's a particular pleasure to say hello.

As an ASCL Associate, you are in one of our fastest-growing membership groups and we're proud to serve you with information, updates and – I hope – the odd moment of unexpected inspiration.

Your Association is in good shape. Our total membership stands at 19,326 and in September alone we recruited a total of 403 new members – a 20% increase on last year.

For all of us at ASCL, autumn is the busiest term and it begins with the usual media brouhaha over results. This year was no different and we did what we have aimed to do over the past few years – to keep the focus on the achievements of young people and their teachers across all subjects, all types of schools and colleges, and not to get drawn into squalid debates about exam malpractice or leaked papers.

We've also been busy shaping the theme instigated by our new president, Rachael Warwick, which will see ASCL look both inwards and outwards (see page 12).

Rachael is leading us in an important new direction, looking at how we build a mission of equalities, diversity

and inclusion. This means, in practice, making sure that ASCL becomes more representative of the many groups of people who make up our society – especially women and people from different ethnic backgrounds.

We're also aiming to provide approaches and toolkits which will help our members and governors in developing leadership teams which better reflect the diverse world our young people inhabit.

I continue to travel to meet leaders across the UK who are living and working in very different systems, with diverging conditions of service, curricula, inspection regimes and qualifications.

While this makes our job in supporting every member more complex, it also gives ASCL a unique opportunity to listen and learn from the extraordinary educational experiment that the UK has become.

I hope you enjoy this edition, and if you haven't yet looked at the new website (see page 4), please do. There's lots there to explore, all designed to remind you of ASCL's core values and our commitment to all our members, wherever they may be.

With all best wishes and thanks for your ongoing support,

Geoff Barton
ASCL General Secretary





Building our community

The relaunched ASCL website is now live with a host of new features, including a place for Associates to share news, views and experiences.

A dedicated section for Associates features in the new ASCL website. It includes news, information and other content to encourage members to become Associates post-retirement and those already in Associate membership to get more involved. There is also space for sharing information on reunion activities.

The web team are also putting the finishing touches to the ASCL Associates Microsite which will give Associates their own platform to share information and will be working with the Associates Committee to develop content for it. If you have suggestions for what you would like to see email them at website@ascl.org.uk

The whole site, which includes exclusive content for members, has a new themes structure making it easier for users to find key advice and information.

“This was very much based on feedback from members, including Associate members who found it difficult to

differentiate between the various types of information produced previously,” says Annette Wade, ASCL’s Director of Marketing and Membership. “Now users can search by theme and topic to get all of the content relating to that subject.”

Also in the pipeline is a new ASCL App later this year.

“We hope that as many of our Associate members as possible will use the digital services and we’ll update you about new features in coming issues of Associates News,” Annette says.

“Members will have received an email with new log in details for the site. This can be used to access exclusive member only content. If you haven’t received your new log in credentials, email website@ascl.org.uk.”

Committee report

Attendees at October's meeting of the Associates committee were given a guided tour of their dedicated area of ASCL's new website and pronounced they were pleased with the new look and easier access. They felt it would undoubtedly raise their profile among the wider membership.

The 2019 reunions in May (Leeds) and October (centred around the Foundling Museum in Bloomsbury) were successful and the venue in London for May 2020's event will be selected from a shortlist at the next meeting.

In other matters, members agreed the retirement seminars often seemed to focus on complex financial matters. More time to deal with wider issues facing those approaching retirement would be useful.

The committee also noted there were more referrals to the Benevolent Fund in recent times with grants used to address 'quality of life' issues. Fortunately, the fund was able to cope with the demand.

Write for Associates News

***Associates News* is looking for more contributors.**

If you have an experience about retirement life to share, if you're active in an organisation or advisory body, if you're fundraising for a good cause or if you are making a splash in a new career field, we'd like to hear about it.

We're also keen to receive contributions for our Time of My Life slot (see page 19), highlighting memorable career or life moments for members.

Associates News is published three times a year in March, July and November but contributions are welcome at any time.

Send your contributions, with images if available, to associatesnews@ascl.org.uk

(We reserve the right to edit copy for length.)

Editorial Group update

Meetings of the Editorial Group, which oversees development of Associates News, will be held twice a year from 2020, it was agreed at the September meeting. Next year, the group will meet prior to Associates meetings on Wednesday 13 May and Wednesday 14 October (10am-11am).

Associate members are being encouraged to suggest subjects and people for future items in the newsletter with call-outs in each issue and on the Associates section of the ASCL website. Book reviews and travel suggestions for school leaders would be particularly welcome along with stories about volunteers.

Obituaries will also continue to feature. Editor Julie Nightingale said they fulfilled an important function in allowing people to read about the lives and achievements of figures in the education world which was not necessarily available elsewhere.

The group accepted it was reliant on suggestions from the membership for much of the material and suggested that recommendations should be made to Julie who will follow up the story ideas.

Next Spring's issue will include an article on the October reunion, a guided walk through Bloomsbury.

Election results

Christine Shellard, Paul Baker, Jill Belcher and Patricia Sales have been elected to the Associates Committee for a three-year term from September 2019 to August 2022. Peter Crowe will join the Committee for a one-year term, September 2019 to August 2020.



Top L-R: Sara Ford, Deputy Policy Director; Duncan Baldwin, Deputy Policy Director; Julia Harden, Funding; Stephen Rollett, Curriculum and Inspection; Hayley Dunn, Business Leadership
Bottom L-R: Tiffnie Harris, Primary; Kevin Gilmartin, Post-16 and Colleges; Louise Hatswell, Pay and Conditions; Stephen Casey, Pensions; Barbara Stanley Independent Schools

Our special advisers

Director of Policy Julie McCulloch explains the role of the ASCL policy team and the focus of its next major projects

Who's in the team?

There are ten people in the policy team: two deputy directors of policy and a group of specialists who are focused on particular issues, such as curriculum or inspection, or on key sectors or categories of membership, such as business leadership (read about them here www.ascl.org.uk/About-us/People).

One of the challenges of the role is helping members understand what we do because, often, if you want to have that influence, you have to work behind closed doors. On any day of the week, there will be one if not two policy people from ASCL at the DfE or Ofsted or other influential bodies, bringing members' views to the discussion.

Our role is to be a conduit between members and government. Increasingly we are trying to be not just reacting but saying what our members think should be different about the system

In terms of the link between policy and member support, a large part of what we do is to try to pre-empt issues that might become challenges for our members

further down the line. So if we can see something coming up that might be problematic, we are able to try to head things off at the pass.

Take, for example, the Labour proposals to abolish independent schools. Our role is to help the politicians to think through the practicalities of their ideological position and what might happen if they attempt to enact that policy. So, at the Labour Party conference, we talked a lot about the consequences of it being rushed through – what would be the impact on state schools of hundreds of thousands of former independent school pupils suddenly descending on them?

Revisiting the Blueprint

A key piece of work for us this academic year is a fresh look at our Blueprint for a Self-improving System, launched in 2015. It envisaged a world five years hence – which is nearly here! – so now is a good time to be looking at where we want to take our vision for the education system next.

We'll be looking at some of our recommendations in that blueprint and what success we and other organisations have had but, perhaps more importantly, thinking about what about the next five years.

Over the next year, we are proposing to pull together a companion piece – effectively a second blueprint – that looks at the education system through a

slightly different lens. The first one was looking at a self-improving system. This next one is going to be focusing on social justice, a topical issue at the moment. We're asking: if we want to be moving towards a more equal, fair and more socially just society, what role can education play in it? What can we do in particular for the most disadvantaged groups?

Diversity in leadership

The policy team has also been working with Rachael Warwick, ASCL President, on the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda (see p12).

School leadership is not the most diverse or equal of professions, so what can ASCL do to address that, what changes can we help to make? We're focusing initially on sex, race and sexual orientation – we felt that was the right place to start.

We have held roundtables to look at the barriers to leadership for these groups – why are there still so few black headteachers, why is there still a glass ceiling for women? We want to produce some resources and guidance on how heads can think about these issues in their own institutions.

It includes shining a light on ourselves as an organisation, looking at ASCL as an employer – what should we do better in terms of recruitment and development for staff? – and at ASCL Council, which is not as diverse as it could be. We're looking at what changes we might be able to introduce from the radical to the smaller things that might make a difference.

It's been heartening to see the support we've had, not just from people within those characteristics but from people who recognise that there is a problem and who want to help do something about it.

The Forgotten Third Commission

Our other major piece of work for this year is around The Forgotten Third Commission. The remit of the commission, chaired by Roy Blatchford, is to look at why we have a third of young people getting to the end of their secondary education without a meaningful qualification in English and maths.

The commission's report was published in September 2019 with recommendations for what we might do to improve the situation.

The headline finding was that the English language GCSE is unfit for purpose. The recommendation was that English language GCSE should be replaced with a passport to English, a different type of qualification, which might not be taken by all young people at the same time but would focus on what we think young people need to be able to do in terms of speaking, reading, listening and in order to be successful in the 21st century.

The challenge is how to develop a qualification that enables them to demonstrate that, rather than just showing what too many of them can't do.

This is an edited extract from the ASCL policy briefing podcast with Julie McCulloch. To hear the full version go to www.ascl.org.uk/News/Podcasts



A win for financial fair play

ASCL Pensions Specialist Stephen Casey on age discrimination cases and what to do if you return to employment after you retire

The McCloud ruling

The McCloud ruling, made by the High Court in December 2018 and supported by the Supreme Court in July this year, concerns a court case brought by members of the judicial and the firefighters' pension schemes.

It related to the transitional protection that was offered to members of final salary arrangements when public sector schemes were reformed around 2015. Their complaint was on the grounds of age discrimination (that some members who were within 10 years of their normal pension age remained in the final salary arrangement while others transitioned into a new arrangement).

In December 2018 the Court of Appeal ruled in their favour and said the changes were discriminatory based on age and that the government hadn't been justified in their decision.

Following the Supreme Court's decision, the Government is considering the next steps to apply the court ruling. Whatever changes are needed will apply across all public service schemes, including the Teachers' Pension. The final decision on any steps needed to compensate members following the McCloud judgement (as this case is often referred to) is the role of an employment tribunal.

There will be changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme, but the Government has confirmed that there will be no reduction to the benefits you have accrued or the pension you're receiving if you're a retired member.

Back to work?

You must inform Teachers' Pensions if you take up any employment that is pensionable in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (irrespective of whether you choose to opt-out

of the scheme for that employment) by completing a Certificate of Re-employment. If you don't it may result in your pension being overpaid, if abatement applies, which you will be required to repay.

If you're working as part of a phased retirement you don't need to complete a Certificate of Re-employment but if you've taken your final benefits after phased retirement you must tell them. (Note that if your employer submits details of service and salary to Teachers' Pensions via monthly data collection (MDC) a Certificate of Re-employment is not required for that employment).

You'll need to send a Certificate of Re-employment for every tax year you're working following your retirement. You would also need to notify if the hours you work or the salary you're receiving changes in any way.

It's important that you do this because if you are receiving age or premature final salary benefits, your pension may be temporarily suspended, depending upon your earnings and irrespective of whether your new service is pensionable or not.

If you took actuarially reduced final salary benefits your pension will not be affected. If you return to work and subsequently take age, premature or ill health retirement your benefits may be affected.

If you're receiving career average benefits they will not be affected by any re-employment.

For more information on pensions, go to www.ascl.org.uk/Help-and-Advice/My-employment,-pay,-conditions-and-pension/Pensions





U3A – lifelong learning for all

U3A (University of the Third Age) began 38 years ago as a self-help body, bringing people together to learn from each other by sharing their knowledge and expertise, and quickly spread around the UK.

Membership of U3A is open to all in their third age – people who are retired or semi-retired.

People meet in halls and community centres or in each other's homes and learn about anything from opera and local history to architecture; learning a musical instrument or language to studying aspects of biology. There is no minimum age limit, though U3A focuses in particular on people who no longer work full-time, in or outside the home.

Each area group is self-funded. There are no fees – except to hear visiting speakers – and costs are kept as low as possible.

The Third Age Trust, the national organising body, publishes Third Age Matters for members with a selection of news, views and information from the many local branches countrywide.

It contains details of subject advisers for anyone starting a new group and advice for established groups covering the arts, creativity, history, languages, pastimes, research, science, sport, thought and wellbeing.

The idea of lifelong learning with and from one's peers has proved to have lasting appeal. In 2016 the movement celebrated its 1,000th U3A and there are now more than 425,000 members.



It's a phenomenon that has obvious attraction for people with a background in education and here two of

ASCL's Associate members share their experiences of learning and teaching with U3A.

You can also read more about the organisation, how to join and start your own group at www.u3a.org.uk

Life is for learning

After relocating from London to the East Midlands, Christine Shellard joined U3A – a move that has opened up a new range of interests and friendships

When I retired, we moved from the Old Kent Road to Coddington, a village on the outskirts of Newark-on-Trent in the East Midlands.



We were able to buy a larger house which could comfortably accommodate visiting friends and family members in an attractive village that was closer to the grandchildren.

As several of my former professional commitments were drawing to a close, joining the local U3A seemed a great way to meet new people, enrich existing interests and to find new ones. I found the details of the local branch from the U3A website.

The Newark and District operation holds one general monthly meeting and currently offers 37 different groups run by members for members, ranging from art appreciation to the ukulele happy band, ballroom dancing to philosophy.

The various subject groups tend to meet monthly in local church halls or members' homes and there are evening trips and theatre events, days out and annual residential interest breaks.

So far, I have attended several Halle orchestral concerts at Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall, enjoyed day trips to the Norfolk coast and Christmas markets in Harrogate and Leeds and have just booked a place on an archaeological five-day adventure in the Scottish borders.

There is a small annual membership fee and a contribution towards room rental and refreshments for each activity attended. A hard-working committee and a

monthly newsletter keep everybody organised and fully informed.

I attend groups focused on archaeology, creative tourism, music appreciation, 'out and about' and science.

A day out at Bletchley Park was one of the science group's highlights, an occasion further enhanced by two presentations made by actual codebreakers.

Inevitably there will be some local differences in the organisation of the UK area and district branches; the quality and variety of content is entirely due to the diligent input and enthusiastic support and hard work of members.

As a newcomer from the Thames to the Trent, U3A has been an excellent way for me to explore what the area has to offer, extend my interests and to meet new people. My new friends and colleagues among the 300 members of the branch are generally retired professional people like myself who have taken the phrase 'life is for learning' to heart.

If you have some spare time in which to learn something new or extend a current hobby, then it could be worth your while to search for the details of a branch near you.

Back to the classroom

Missing his teaching days, Roger Wickson was delighted to find U3A and a whole new set of 'pupils'

When I retired as head of The King's School Chester in 2000 I found myself utterly bereft, having no one to teach.

An old boy of King's, Graeme White, a distinguished medieval historian and head of history at Chester University, put me in touch with Keele University and in September 2001 I joined their Department of Continuing Professional Education, teaching medieval history.

In my class was a splendid lady who was a great enthusiast for the U3A and she encouraged my wife and me to join which we did, becoming members of her recorded opera group in the Crewe and Nantwich branch of the U3A, which has around 1,600 members.

That was in 2002 and we have been committed members ever since. I now lead the opera group and another on medieval history while my wife leads a history of embroidery group.

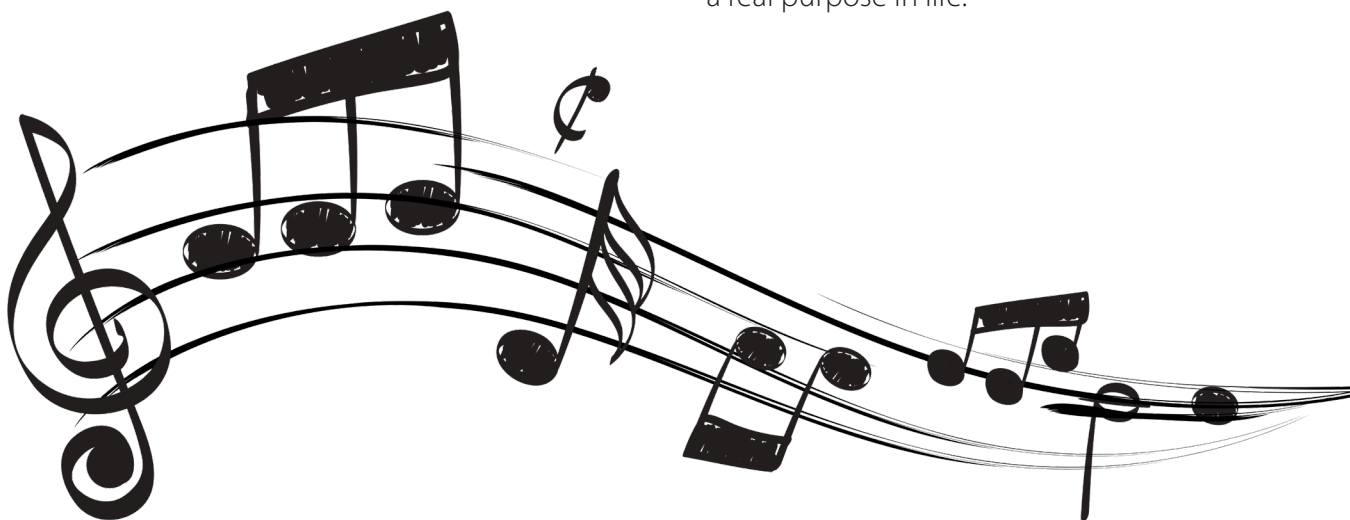
In the opera group, which meets for just over two hours on the first Thursday of the month, everyone is invited to suggest a work they would like presented and or to present (though they seem to prefer the old schoolmaster rather than take to the stage themselves).

I present a range of operas although Wagner defeats me completely and I have to grit my teeth to present Puccini. My favourite composers are Haydn – yes he wrote operas – Mozart, Weber, Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini and Verdi; I am also fond of comic operas, above all by Offenbach and Gilbert and Sullivan. I aim to present a mix of the familiar and unfamiliar and always provide a handout with some information about the composer then a detailed synopsis.

I do nothing more complicated than take the listeners through a CD recording or as much of it as we can go through in the time we have but I explain what happens in the parts omitted (mostly spoken dialogue and recitatives) as well as in the sections I play them. This is what members seem to like.

The medieval history group with about 25 members who meet for a weekly two-hour session. In 2015-16 the course was on Magna Carta, followed by a two-year course on Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest, and in September 2019 I embarked on a course on the medieval church. It's a wonderful group of very able people including several former history teachers and a semi-retired professor of astronomy at Birmingham University. (Her speciality is the centre of the Sun).

The U3A is a wonderful organisation. It provides stimulus for older people in a huge range of activities many of which are not academic and it also provides friendship and companionship. I think it must give many a real purpose in life.



Team player

ASCL President Rachael Warwick on overcoming parental doubt, her plans to meet Associates in the year ahead, and her brush with Norwegian Black Metal

How long have you been in teaching?

I began in 1994 after completing a PGCE in English at Goldsmiths, University of London. Prior to this, I completed a degree in English Language and Literature at Oxford University and then worked in publishing, first for a travel publishers and then as a fiction editor for Usborne Publishing on the Agent Arthur's Puzzle Adventure series.

Why did you choose to enter the education profession?

My father was a self-made business man and determined that I wouldn't become a teacher so he arranged for me to undertake various internships working for merchant banks, law firms and a national newspaper. Unfortunately (for my father) these experiences only convinced me that teaching English to young people in comprehensive schools was certainly the most interesting and fulfilling career choice that I could make. Moreover, having attended five schools myself, in England and the US, and in both the state and private sectors, I was convinced that I could do better!

What has your career path been?

Over the last 25 years, I have worked in eight different schools in London, Sussex and Oxfordshire in very different settings. The experience of working in a variety of different types of school – urban and rural, single sex and mixed, struggling and thriving – has helped me to appreciate the diversity of our school system and the importance of understanding context in leading school improvement.

I started out as an English teacher, then moved to head of English, and for the last 17 years I have enjoyed working as a senior leader, headteacher and now

executive headteacher of Ridgeway Education Trust, a 2,500-strong multi-academy trust in south Oxfordshire. I have worked full time throughout my career, other than for two fairly short periods of maternity leave for my two sons, Joe and Sam, now 16 and 14 respectively.

I was not someone who always knew they wanted to lead a school but, instead, I was always interested in the next job and having a wider influence on the school community. As is often the case, it was the timely intervention of a great mentor, my headteacher at the time, which triggered the ambition for headship when he simply said: 'You must do it, Rachael!'

What's been your best/worst moment?

There isn't one best moment. I have been privileged to enjoy countless wonderful moments in my career, almost always these have involved celebrating the many and varied achievements and successes of students and staff. Often these moments have involved laughter – as you know, there is great joy in being a teacher and a headteacher.

Most recently, I received an email from a young man to whom I had taught A level English more than ten years ago, thanking me for my investment in him. He reminded me that I had indulged his interest in Norwegian Black Metal documentaries, and yet still managed to foster a love of academic writing!

The death of a young person is the hardest experience to bear, and, sadly, this has happened on too many occasions.

How has education changed in the time you've been in the profession?

In my view, schools have changed, and for the better, over the last 20 or so years. The appetite for professional collaboration around pedagogy and curriculum, the business of teaching, is exciting and the advent of social media has allowed this collaboration to take place at national and global levels.

The growth of evidence-informed practice and new technologies, while still in their infancy, have the

potential to further transform learning. While mental health issues for young people are of huge concern, the support provided by schools for young people, albeit with increasingly scarce resources, is often superb.

Finally, the myth of the 'hero headteacher' has largely been dispelled and, instead, we see the importance of building, developing and growing great teams.

What are your ambitions for your year as President?

The role of President is to serve Council and to represent the views of members and this is my main ambition for the year ahead. Listening to the stories of school leaders and being able to share these with civil servants, ministers and politicians to effect positive change for the education system is a great privilege and not one which I take lightly.

My chosen theme for my presidential year is leadership equality and diversity: to work collaboratively to create a culture across the school system, and within ASCL, which places equality and inclusion at its heart, to encourage more diverse leaders to step forward.

What is the role of Associates and how can they support and be supported by ASCL?

It's fantastic that ASCL has such a thriving Associate membership group and I look forward to attending

one of the Associates' meetings at some point over the coming year. Listening to highly experienced school leaders and sharing with them the current priorities for our education system is an exciting opportunity to learn and grow together and I look forward to the opportunity to do so in my presidential year.

Listening and learning - Rachael Warwick in the classroom

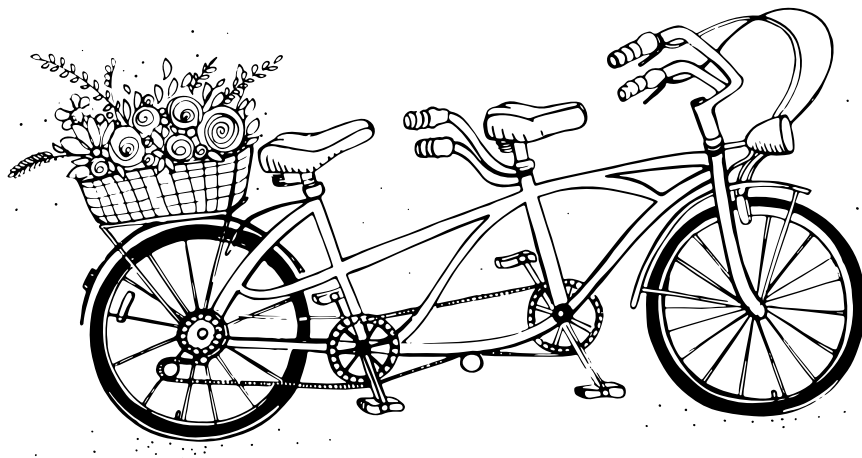
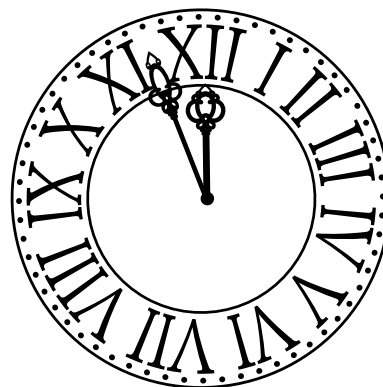
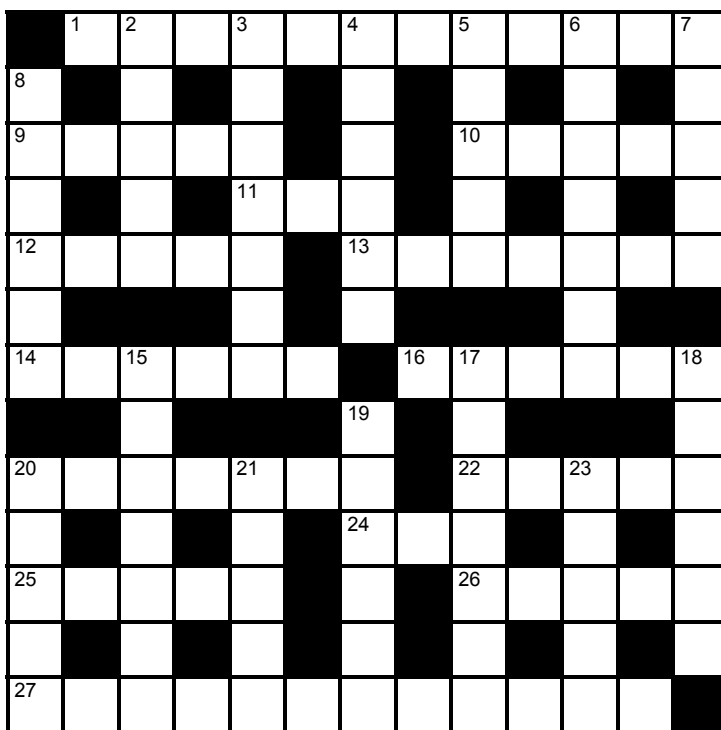


Across

- 1 Popular alcoholic drink (6,6)
- 9 Ease up (5)
- 10 Cover with cloth (5)
- 11 Expert (3)
- 12 Harmonious sounds (5)
- 13 Perfumed (7)
- 14 Small village (6)
- 16 Express dissent (6)
- 20 Family appellation (7)
- 22 Become established (3,2)
- 24 Aspire (3)
- 25 Ecstasy (5)
- 26 Burning (5)
- 27 Operator of a railway locomotive (6,6)

Down

- 2 Caste (5)
- 3 Sticky substance made from sugar (7)
- 4 Reliable (6)
- 5 Fence made of shrubs (5)
- 6 Cause to jump with fear (7)
- 7 Bear fruit (5)
- 8 Heat (6)
- 15 Time before noon (7)
- 17 Type of long-grained rice (7)
- 18 Bicycle for two (6)
- 19 Deep-water floor (6)
- 20 Animal prized for its fur (5)
- 21 Fire-raising (5)
- 23 Double (5)



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- FLOOD ◇ TURN LEFT
- HALT ◇ UNSAFE
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- NO ENTRY ◇ WAY OUT
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Feeding the homeless

Volunteering post-retirement can be hugely rewarding but it also brings its challenges, a little like school . . .

'I have received advice on my washing-up technique'

Half-way to retirement, I was interested to hear a colleague's account of his work providing breakfast for the homeless at his local church. I felt it sounded a worthwhile thing to do now that I had a little more time and I Googled 'homelessness' to find somewhere local where I might do something similar. The nearest was a centre which provided daytime shelter, meals and hot drinks, advice, clothing and showers in a local market town.

I was invited for interview and was shown around the centre, which had a substantial kitchen, café area, games room, outdoor area, toilets and showers, and was asked if I could help in the kitchen every Monday afternoon for a couple of hours. My job would be to serve free soup and toast and help with washing-up and clearing up.

The centre was well-funded and stayed open until 3.30pm, providing free cereals for breakfast, hot drinks and free soup in the afternoon. In addition, at little cost, clients could buy a full English breakfast and a two-course lunch. These were the halcyon days as there was a chef and sous chef, as well as at least one volunteer every day.

Things have changed a lot over my six years there. The first chef was a very polite, friendly Filipino man who had worked as a chef on cruise ships and ensured the clients had an excellent range of food. His sous chef had been in prison and recognised what the centre had done for him when he had been homeless and was keen to give something back.

'Making do'

When funding was cut, the centre was only able to open in the mornings, as it has ever since. The sous-chef was moved into another role and the chef left and wasn't

replaced, leading to a long period of 'making do'. As volunteers, we were told that we couldn't be left on our own in the kitchen for health and safety reasons, despite the fact some of us had been working there some time, knew the routines, and could deal with the clients. It meant that the other employees had to take turns in the kitchen supporting us and it also meant that clients often had to make do with a lot of hot soup – though my greatest achievement was a pasta tray-bake!

One of the enjoyable aspects of this from the volunteers' point of view is that we worked with a range of different staff, from those who loved the chance to cook a meal, to those who wanted to leave it to us and sit down if they could. And there was one who loved to gossip, regaling me with the ups and downs of her new relationship with a temperamental Spanish woman after she had parted from her husband.

At last, there was a little more funding and a new chef arrived. The clients loved her and her food and she was good to work for. Then, one Christmas, she just disappeared, and we were back to square one.

Around this time the centre was taken over by a new organisation and one of the first things to happen was the gradual refurbishment of the whole centre, which started with the kitchen. A new chef was appointed and, just as in school, I used to know as soon as I met people whether they would cut the mustard in the classroom, I knew this appointment wouldn't last. Perhaps an indication was when I found her in the kitchen continually mopping up water from a leaking pipe and had to suggest putting the pipe into a bucket. Unsurprisingly, I learnt after a few months that she had left, too.

'No nonsense'

Now we have a 'no nonsense' woman who makes even the clients afraid to put a foot wrong. I have received advice on my washing-up technique and have to bite my tongue on occasions. However, she cooks great food, and the increased numbers coming in for lunch reflect that.



Some re-organisation has created a welcoming reception area, rather than a hole in the wall, and we are no longer serving food out of tins that have passed their 'best before' date! The philosophy is to help the clients to help themselves, which means, whereas we used to serve breakfast, it is now put out for them to pour their own cereal or make their own toast. For the first time, we were required to attend a training session on how to relate to the clients, obtain a DBS check and complete a level 2 award in food safety and catering – better late than never! There is no longer a games room as the clients are encouraged to seek support or work during the day.

The clients themselves range from the very smart through to the slightly scruffy, the polite and friendly to the monosyllabic. Many are grateful for what is provided and thank staff and compliment the chef on the food (the odd one will be less gracious and say, 'Not pasta again').

Some of the best moments have been jokes with the staff, other volunteers and the clients. Volunteers have

included a former GP, an anaesthetist, an HMRC officer and a probation officer. I have been to quiz evenings and marshalled at fun-runs (though I declined the Masquerade Ball).

For me, it is a rewarding way to spend every other Monday morning and something so different from school life, yet similar, in that there is never a dull moment and it is hopefully helping people in some small way.

The writer is a former headteacher.

Do you volunteer in your spare time? Share your experience with us. Write to associatesnews@ascl.org.uk

SOLUTIONS

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WORDSEARCH

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Associates News – coming soon!

In future issues of *Associates News* we'll be looking at members who have found a new vocation after retiring from headship, exploring ASCL's new microsite and app for Associate members, and previewing the Associates 2020 reunion.

And if there's something you'd like to see in *Associates News*, then let us know. For the next issue, we're particularly keen to hear from you if you have a recommendation for a cultural trip, activity break or holiday destination you think other members would enjoy. Send your ideas to associatesnews@ascl.org.uk

The next issue is out in Spring 2020.

Under African skies

John Caperon remembers teaching and living in Uganda in the late Sixties

How long were you in Uganda?

We spent 27 months there in the late Sixties at a point where the former protectorate status of the country had been replaced by independent rule, under President Milton Obote. We were based at Nyakasura School, near Fort Portal in the Toro region.

When were you there?

1967-1969 were good (that is, peaceful) years in Uganda, though the Army was felt by expats to be a potentially threatening force under the command of General Idi Amin.

How old were you at the time?

I was 23. Felicity and I had married (on a student grant) on graduation in 1966, and I had completed my PGCE the following year while she taught in downtown Bristol. Prompted partly by meeting a Ugandan Anglican priest at church, we thought of the country as a first teaching posting.

What was your job?

I was appointed under a scheme run by the then Department of Overseas Development to provide teachers for the 'developing' countries. Uganda at the time had 22 senior secondary schools and these were then staffed overwhelmingly by expats; I taught English and Religious Studies to Cambridge Overseas A level.

Was Lucy born there?

Lucy, the first of our four daughters, was born in Kabarole CMS mission hospital in Fort Portal in 1968. Strangers would drop into the private ward simply to see this novel English baby and to say 'Webale mtoto' – literally, 'Thank you for the baby'.



Who is in the picture?

The photograph shows Felicity and a Karamajong woman, both with their babies.

Like most expat teachers, we tried to spend school holidays travelling to see the astonishing range of scenery and wildlife of Uganda. En route to Karamoja – a harsh, semi-desert area in the very North East of the country – we stopped for a brief roadside break and the woman with her daughter and tiny baby came out of nowhere, apparently just to see us. It was a meeting of friendly curiosity on both sides, I think, and we compared babies by sign, with a smattering of Swahili. The Karamajong people lived a nomadic life; cattle rustling was rife and the local police station we stopped at held an impressive arsenal of confiscated weapons: mostly razor-sharp spears designed to kill any marauding lion. For expats, camping in Kidepo National Park involved warding off lions by keeping a fire blazing outside the tent all night...

Have you been back since?

Uganda experienced appalling disruption and violence during the dictatorship of Idi Amin (1971-1979), but subsequently the country has returned to a better normality under Yoweri Museveni, who, however, has regrettably – like too many African leaders – prolonged his presidency. Sadly, the right time for us to revisit – or for Lucy to see her birthplace – hasn't come ... yet!



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